Dear Jim, 3/24/75

Again an update and further thanks for the contents of your 3/19 mailing, which I finished reading before bed last night. From the always marvellous Hoppe to the valuable factual.

I have a combination of good feelings this morning, from the physical exercise of the weekend on which the rain held off until after midnight and the arrangements for the new transcripts. I've trimmed out most of the brush of the trees I d down, sawed up all but the butt of the largest, a damaged maple that required considerable manipulating so the saw would not wedge, and dragged it all to the house for heat. Except for the legs, it is werely tiredness. I've pulled several muscles and I even have a good feeling from that. Each trip is about 1,000 feet, so I'm getting some of the exercise I miss and could not get when Lil is not home. My situation requires that I be able to answer the phone and I can't afford an answering service.

I've put the Ober clips and your note of the 18th aside after reading the note because I have this highschool dripout friend in NYC suburbs I'll be asking to go to the library for further checking. This will give me the leads for him. When it is spelled out for him he gets what I ask for. Sorry about the time it took but appreciative. There are alsways too many new things requiring time here. I keep it from oppressing but I hate some of the need.

One apparently has been eliminated with the new transcript.

Steve and Jim got together briefly and will again early this week when their free times coincide. Jim had read the transcript once in haste and offers an optimistic opinion based on logic and the rules of evidence, all else is now irrelevant. I am not that optimistic but I've seen that potential.

I'm content to leave the breaking of the story up to Steve and unless he tells me I'll not even know when it will be. He is able, honest and a solid man whose common sense told him from the neginning there had to have been a conspiracy. However, I'll undertake to arrange to prepare some who have overcome past obstacles for me, have taken initial steps to cover them, and to explain, beginnong today.

I've a few follow-up items for Steve in mind if he wants them and when I've time I'll make copies for him. I've used them recently, in that TV appearance in which I ended Jones Harris' attempt to pin it all on Warren and Howard Willens' attempt at the same and self-justification (to say nothing of public comment on the subject!) You recall the Ben Franklin story. What I aired them. You haven't heard a peep since.

This time there should be no problem with Hoch. Jim phoned him. Paul had not yet received his copy. He is satisfied with the arrangements I've made. He persists in face-saving. Jim chuckled as he reported Paul's plea that Jim hold down my allegedly excessive interpretations. (I do too because with all I've published, aside for reviewer whoring with Frame-Up there has been no single allegation ever of excessive interpretation or factual error, a record of which I'm proud. Especially considering the volume, complexity and controversial nature of the material and the total lack of editing or counsel except for Howard and Jim and IV.) Paul has also declined my invitation to accompany if and when I go to the committees.

Not asking you if you would like a copy is not an oversight and the cost here would be only about a buck and a half. Rather is it because I've asked Jim to phone a specific person and ask for a better xerox. In this case there is reason to believe there may have been some cropping and the copy is not as clear as it should be or an original. When Jim gets this there will be clearer copies and he can have them made for less.

If you would like one faster, please let me know. I'll send it pronto.

Part of the deal with Playboy is set. There remains much to overcome for the rest but McKinley's evaluation is that it is promising. The agreed-to part (on their end) is the Ray one. They'll take the line in a major play that he is innocent and proven so, with boxes of documents reproduced, etc. It will be a collage, with some interview. On the JFK stuff the overworked articles editor, as Jim put it yesterday, is becoming a convert. This has to mean from what I told him because he hasn't had enough time to read the mass he took with him if he did anything else. And his regular job is heavy.

In the end I decided to phone him yesterday, after much agonizing over it. He was glad I did and when I outlined how I've arranged to handle the transcript he agrees it is the one way that could serve all interests and that it preserves their options for them. They are bound to nothing and open to everything except the initialk break.

I'm to hear from him on when he'll begin the interviewing anf fact collecting some time this week. Balt. Sun to come for photos also this week. (Interesting reaction/response from this previously unknown reporter who had sommuch of my dim past in mind to ask me about when I asked him if after thinking about the interview there remains anything else he needs. It is that "I got exactly what I wanted.However, I do not anticipate an ax job.) A large unday play at about the timeof the break on this transcript will be helpful if it is a good one.

Jim is upset about being foreclmosed from so legal moves he'd planned on the Ray case, a motion for a rehearing. it is attributable to two problems: his lack of experience and familiarity with all the aspects of appeals procedures and the total abdication of publicity-hogging senior counsel who have never done any of the real legal work. Bud is off vacationing again, having found he needed a vacation after doing a long brief for a millionaire client. He did nothing before the hearing (his then vacation was Russia) and nothing after it in preparation for the decision. There were then momonths to think it through, do some work and guide Jim.

Instead he was having fund after each burst of work and defeating all the arrangements I'd made. It has taken me until now to undo that, a considerable waste of my time, hurt to Ray and interference in what we could have accomplished. I had it set up in October. It is now the end of March. You have some idea of the amount of time and emption it required just to get back to where we were. And so much else could have been advanced by that going well, as it then should have.

Reur 3/17 attached to the extra copy of the ChiTrib Squires piece: I see more in it that you suggest. Squires, remember, was part of the Seigenthaler teamand that kooky book. In additikn, I see what had as its most probable source Oswald in New Orleans and awareness of WW IV in that piece. I thus also find the timing interesting, as I do the extensive Potomac mishmash of yesterday. Potomac's handling was in the works for months. Paul Valentine was originally part of it. He then told me that Henry Allen would be in touch with me on it. Since silence. If the Squires thing can be laid to the current Gregorian chants and what interest they have generated, Potomac can't be.

I'm toying with writing Bradlee again.

Thanks again and best,